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LETTER DATED 25 SEPTEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In accordance with Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 22 September 1998 from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Committee of Seven of the Council of the League of Arab States, which deals with the Lockerbie issue.

I should be grateful if you would draw the attention of the members of the Security Council to this letter and its annex and have them circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hussein HASSOUNA
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

* Reissued for technical reasons.

Annex

Letter dated 22 September 1998 from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Committee of Seven of the Council of the League of Arab States addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Committee of Seven of the Council of the League of Arab States, which was instructed by the Council at its emergency session on 22 March 1992 to monitor the dispute between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the United States of America and the United Kingdom over the Lockerbie issue, presents its compliments, and refers to the recent acceptance by the United States and the United Kingdom of the proposal put forward by regional and international organizations that the accused men should be tried in a neutral country, namely, the Netherlands. It also refers to the resolution adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its meeting held in Cairo on 16 and 17 September 1998. Having studied developments at its meeting in New York on 2 September 1998, the Committee affirms the following:

First: It congratulates the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on the flexibility it has demonstrated and what may be characterized as its urbane and realistic behaviour in dealing with this issue and agreeing that its citizens should be tried in a third, neutral country. It expresses profound disquiet at the grievous material and human losses sustained by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and its people as a result of the sanctions imposed on that country during this period.

Second: It expresses its satisfaction that the United States of America and the United Kingdom should, finally, have accepted the proposals put forward four years ago by regional and international organizations, and regrets their long delay in doing so.

Third: It confirms its continued support for the position of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, which seeks to guarantee a fair and impartial trial for the accused men, and calls upon the United States, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands to enter into negotiations with the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya either directly or using the good offices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with a view to implementing the initiative referred to in Security Council resolution 1192 (1998), including the arrangements for the trial and the security measures relating to the accused men.

Fourth: It affirms its complete approval of and absolute support for the legitimate demands of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, as set forth below:

1. Guarantees must be provided that the accused men will not be handed over or taken to either the United States of America or the United Kingdom for any reason, and that they will, if convicted, serve their sentences in the Netherlands or the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

2. The witnesses required from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya must be clearly identified.

3. Guarantees must be provided as to the legal, religious, personal, social and health rights of the accused men throughout the various stages of the trial, as well as for their safety and security during their journey to and from the Netherlands and while they are there.

4. Once the trial begins, this issue shall be regarded as settled, since the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has already complied with all Security Council demands. The sanctions must be completely lifted as soon as the accused men appear before the court.

In presenting to you the foregoing, the Committee requests the Security Council to take it into consideration when examining the issue.

The Committee would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

The Committee of Seven

Signed on behalf of:

The Arab Republic of Egypt
[signature]

The Republic of Tunisia
[signature]

The Kingdom of Morocco
[signature]

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
[signature]

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania
[signature]

The Syrian Arab Republic
[signature]

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
[signature]